

*African Journal of Drug & Alcohol Studies*, 7(1), 2008

Copyright © 2008, CRISA Publications

## ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE AMONG ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS IN ISRAEL: A REVIEW

**Shoshana Weiss**

Alcohol Research Unit, Karmiel, Israel

---

### ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to cover the current state of alcohol use among immigrants from Ethiopia in Israel and to suggest recommendation for future activities. In addition, as a background, it attempts to describe the Ethiopian immigration to Israel and its problems, as well as some background characteristics of alcohol use in Ethiopia. This paper is the first summary in English of findings in alcohol epidemiology and treatment in relation to immigrants from Ethiopia. A review of all studies published in the professional literature concerning alcohol use and treatment among Ethiopian immigrants in Israel was conducted as well as summary of the main literature concerning the problems of the Ethiopian community in Israel and alcohol use in Ethiopia. The review located only a few studies and reports in Hebrew in relation to alcohol use among immigrants from Ethiopia. However, it identifies alcohol use among young immigrants as more prevalent than among the other Israelis, and shows that Ethiopian immigrants are overrepresented in treatment in comparison to their segment in the Israeli absorbing society. Recommendations include the need for research on alcohol use patterns among adults, as well as developing and implementing more alcohol prevention programs, including programs in Amharic, and training of Ethiopian professionals and recovered Ethiopian alcoholics to lead the prevention activities.

**KEY WORDS:** alcohol, Ethiopia, immigrants, Israel

---

### INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the alcohol use phenomenon among Ethiopian immigrants in Israel, there is first a need to describe the Ethiopian emigration and its problematic characteristics, which play a role in initiating alcohol use among this population and provide some information concerning alcohol use in Ethiopia.

#### *The scope of the Ethiopian emigration*

The Israeli Law of Return enables every Jew to become a citizen of Israel. Any person who has at least one Jewish grandparent is eligible for automatic citizenship. This is the result of the notorious German laws during the Holocaust in World War Two, whereby any person whose grandparent was a Jew was persecuted and branded as an enemy of the Third Reich – ultimately doomed to extermination.

The Ethiopian Jews are considered to be descendants of the Dan tribe who came to Ethiopia in 719 BCE. They straggled during the centuries to keep their Jewish religion. However, when the missionary activity intensified at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, large numbers converted. These people, whose ancestors had been Jews, are referred to as the Falashmura. However, in the case of Ethiopian immigrants, some are allowed to immigrate on the basis of family reunification. The Falashmura immigrants enter Israel under the Law of Entry, a humanitarian law designed to enable relatives of Israelis to immigrate. The Israeli government does not want to absorb Christians who simply want to get out of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian emigration has a heavy burden on the Israeli economy. Therefore, the government follows strict procedures for determining eligibility to immigrate. About 5,000 Ethiopians came from camps in Sudan (they had escaped from Ethiopia to Sudan) by ships or airplanes during the years 1977-1984, 8,500, mainly from Gondar, came in the framework of Moses Operation in 1984 (by flights from camps in Sudan), 15,000 came during the years 1985-1991, 14,500 came in the framework of Solomon Operation in 25 May 1991 (by 40 flights from Addis Ababa), and about 38,000 came during the years 1992-2006, including some thousands of Falashmura immigrants, who could prove some relations to already Israeli-Ethiopian citizens (Aliya and Klita Department, 2007). In 2006 the Ethiopian community in Israel numbered about 105,000 people, approximately half (49%) of whom were under the age of 19 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007). There are still Falashmura who wait to come to Israel, and the process will probably finish in 2008. It is important to note, that in 2006, the population of Israel numbered about 7,000,000, of whom 20% were Arabs (mainly Moslems). Thus, the Ethiopians consisted about 1.4% of the entire population.

#### *The characteristics of the emigration experience*

The Ethiopian emigration experience is characterized by abandonment of property, marching on foot from the villages to Addis

Ababa and to Sudan, haste, illegal and secret departure, hiding from authorities, neighbors, and people on the way, splitting of families members, thirst, hunger, sickness, death and robbers on the way, illegal entrance to Sudan, and long stay in refugee camps in Sudan in difficult conditions. The Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel came from a religious traditional society to a modern, pluralistic mostly secular society, from tribal religious leadership to political leadership, from a rustic way of life to an urban lifestyle, from primitive agricultural environment to innovative technological surroundings, from a situation where no priority is given to education to a situation of obligatory formal education, from a culture in which the adults and the extended family (up to some hundred members) are in the center to a society in which the children and the nuclear family are in the center, and from a authoritative-patriarchal atmosphere to a liberal one (Bar-Yosef, 2001).

#### *Problems of integration*

Due to cultural differences and other problems, members of this ethnic group have not succeeded in full integration into the Israeli society (e.g. Benita & Noam, 1995; Chakaly, 2002; Cohen, 1994; Halper, 1985; Kaplan, 1999; Kaplan, 2002; Maart, 2006; Offer, 2004; Roar-Strier, 1996, 2006; Savanto & Yosef, 2004; Shabtay, 2001; Shemesh, 1999; Schindler, 1993; Schindler & Ribner, 1995; Short, 1995). An especially serious problem is the unsuccessful absorption of the children into the school system (mainly the religious schools) (Dotan, 1985; Adamaso, 2007). Their educational achievements are the lowest in Israel. The educational level (Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2006) of the Ethiopian community can be seen in Table 1. In 2002 25% of Ethiopian students dropped out of school in comparison to 15% of the rest of Jewish students. Thus, a quarter of Ethiopians do not graduate from high school (Shabtay, 2003).

The vast majority of the Ethiopian community is living below the poverty line. A lot of families with many children are headed by unemployed men (in two thirds of the

**Table 1.** The education level of Ethiopians and the general population in Israel in 2005 (%)

Years in School	Ethiopians	Jewish General Population
0-8	49.2	5.4
9-11	6.8	10.8
12	32.2	32.7
13+	11.8	51.1

families the parents are unemployed) in their late fifties and sixties (the older age of the fathers is attributed to the common practice of men marrying women twenty and even thirty years younger than they are). In addition, 60% of families have five or more children up to 18 years of age (JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2001), combined with a high percentage of single women who are also unable to work (one-fifth of Ethiopian families are single mothers [JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2001]). However, even those who do work have difficulty making enough money. Many have a limited ability to speak Hebrew (45% cannot speak Hebrew at all [JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2001]) or even read or write in their own language. Most families live in distressed neighborhoods in concentrated Ethiopian pockets in peripheral regions of the big cities in the center of Israel or in developing towns in the peripheral parts of the country. This spatial and social isolation and the creation of Ethiopian enclaves are due to the conjuncture of poor policy implementation, lack of political power, the immigrants' strong preference to settle close to kinsmen, market constraints (as they are given money that can buy homes in the least desirable places), and the fact that many Israelis consider having Ethiopian neighbors as a threat to their social and economic status and not willing to tolerate more than a small number of them in their neighborhood (Lazin, 1997). Especially the immigrants from the former Soviet Union express unwillingness to have social contact with immigrants from Ethiopia (Shchori, 2005). However, it is important to bear in mind that while the Ethiopians suffer from some racial prejudice by some groups of Israelis, they do not suffer

from any institutionalized political exclusion or racial discrimination.

Many children are out in the streets or in malls, and they ditch school to hang out (Kaplan & Rosen, 1993). In 1997 about 1,500 Ethiopian youngsters lived in the streets (Nevo, 1999). The parents have little control over this because they have a lot of children, small crowded apartments, a weak mastery of basic skills, and a feeling that they don't know how to discipline their children, because their children know very little of their native Ethiopian language (Amharic) and instead speak "street Hebrew". The problems are more serious among the early immigrants (who came in Moses Operation) because they came unprepared and abandoned everything behind. Therefore, juvenile delinquency is growing and children are involved in petty crime and some times in serious criminal activities (Teroan, 2005; Apel, 2004).

As can be seen in the Table, the number of records of delinquencies increased from 139 in 1996 to 933 in 2004 - a 6.7 times in 8 years. It is important to note, that in 2001 Ethiopian youngsters were 1.3% of all youngsters. In addition, the Ethiopian offenders are younger in comparison to the rest of the offenders (Shabtay, 2003).

Ethiopian youth gangs are also in many of the cities where there is a concentration of Ethiopian immigrants. Some Ethiopian youths believe that Israelis treat them as "primitive" because they are black, and adopt an "African-American" or "African-Caribbean" image (which is alien to both Israeli and Ethiopian cultures) and favor reggae and rap music (Ben-David & Tirosh Ben-Ari, 1997; Shabtay, 2001a). These "globalize notions" of blackness are not necessarily negative as they could also be interpreted as an attempt to belong to a wider transnational community, but these types of racial expressions may also contribute to reactions of revolt and rejection of the mainstream values and norms by Ethiopian youngsters who are racially distinct.

Domestic violence is very serious. Ethiopian men found the loss of their power as heads of families overwhelming and difficult to cope with (Kacen, 2006). Women adapt better to

the new society for practical reasons. They are the ones who attend to schooling, health issues of the family, shopping (in Israel they have access to money), and find out about the available assistance. Men lose status, where the language, skills, education, occupation and politics are different to those they were used to and this triggers unwarranted violence. During the years 1992-2001, 7.11% of all women murdered in Israel were newcomers from Ethiopia. This is an indication of the high risk factor among this population (L.O.-Combat Violence against Women, Web site article). During January-November 2004, Ethiopian women consisted 8.09% of 692 women who were absorbed in shelters for battered women. In addition, 310 Ethiopian women submitted complaints against their violent husbands (2% of the total 16,000 files) (Cohen, 2006). During 2006, five Ethiopian women were murdered by their husbands out of 16 women who were murdered by spouses that year. 11% of women who entered shelters for battered women in 2006 were Ethiopians (Beno, 2007).

There are various special programs aimed at Ethiopian newcomers offered by the government (Ministries of Absorption, Education, and Welfare) as well as by The Jewish Agency and NGO's (Committee of Immigration and Absorption of the Knesset, 2006; Gitait, 2006; Cohen et al., 2005; Malamko, 2006; Information Center, 1999). They offer scholastic assistance, parent workshops, army preparation, youth outreach centers, higher education scholarships, community leadership training and computer training, but these are far from enough. Thus, despite the enthusiasm around the heroic ingathering of Ethiopian Jews, the situation is problematic.

## ALCOHOL USE IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian alcohol consumption is low by world standards. Alcohol consumption peaked in 1983 (1.2 liters adult per capita consumption (age 15+) of absolute alcohol) (WHO, 1999). In 2001 it was 0.9 liter (WHO, 2004). The

unrecorded alcohol consumption in Ethiopia is estimated to be 1.0 liter pure alcohol per capita for the above mentioned population (WHO, 2004). Along with the industrial alcoholic beverages manufactured in Ethiopia or imported by the international alcohol companies, Ethiopia is known for its local traditional home-brewed alcoholic beverages: Tella, Kofere, Shamit, Tej and Araki (WHO, 2004; Selinus, 1971; Desta, 1977). Other alcoholic beverages found in Ethiopia are Borde and Katikala (WHO, 2004).

Various studies concerning alcohol use were conducted in Ethiopia, where approximately 45.0% - 50.0% of the population are Moslem (WHO, 2004). A survey conducted in 1988 among university students in northwest Ethiopia found the percentage of current alcohol use to be 31.1%. Alcohol was frequently used in combination with tobacco and khat (Zein, 1988). A 1989 survey of 519 high school students in Addis Ababa found that 9.2% consumed alcohol heavily (no definition of "heavily" was given) (Kebede & Ketsela, 1993). A 1994-1995 survey of 1,436 young people aged 15 to 24 years of age in Addis Ababa found that 34.0% consumed alcohol regularly and that 7.0% of these consumed more than 100 grams of pure alcohol per week (Betre, Kebede, & Kassaye, 1997). A 1994 study of 10,203 adults in Addis Ababa, using CAGE and CIDI instruments, revealed 1.0% cases of alcohol dependence (1.9% males, 0.1% females) (Kebede & Alem, 1999). Another study carried out in the same period among 10,468 adults (aged 15 and above) in a rural district (Butajira), using CAGE, found that 3.7% were problem drinkers (7.5% males, 0.9% females). Among those who drank, 16.0% met the criterion for problem drinking (Alem, Kebede, & Kullgarn, 1999). This study among adults (Alem et al., 1999) as well as a study among youth (Kebede & Ketsela, 1993a) also revealed that suicide attempts were associated with heavy alcohol intake and that problem drinkers reported suicide attempts more than others. Another study conducted between October 1995 and January 1996 in Butajira among 510 adults, using CIDI, found the

lifetime prevalence rate of alcohol dependence to be 1.1% (2.5% males, 0.3% females) (Awais, Kebede, & Alem, 1999).

A 1998 study of 241 students from two governmental high schools and one private high school in Addis Ababa and 187 students from a governmental high school in Butajira revealed that the percentages of lifetime use of alcohol were 17.9%, 57.8% and 18.2% in the urban governmental high schools in Addis Ababa, private high school in Addis Ababa and Butajira high school, respectively. Another WHO survey in 2003 of 4,920 adults 18 years of age and older found that 4.1% drank 5 or more drinks in one sitting (7.7% males, 0.4% females) at least once per week. About 9.3% were heavy drinkers who drank 40 grams or more of pure alcohol per day for men and 20 grams or more of pure alcohol per day for women (WHO, 2004). Another WHO survey in 2003 among 1,158 young people 18 to 24 years old revealed that 2.0% drank 5 or more drinks in one sitting at least once per week. According to another WHO survey conducted that year among 1,222 persons, the mean daily grams of pure alcohol consumed by drinkers totaled 23.6 grams (27.8 among males, 17.2 among females) (WHO, 2004).

A study conducted in an isolated island community in southern Ethiopia revealed that the prevalence of alcohol dependence was 1.5% with all cases being males (Kebede et al., 2005). Another study carried out in 2002 among female sex workers aged 15-49 years and working in seven urban centers found that unprotected sex and sexually transmitted infections were associated with alcohol use (Alem et al., 2006). Another study conducted in the same period among 20,434 young people between 15 and 24 years of age revealed that the use of alcohol was associated with risky sexual behavior, especially among daily drinkers (Kebede et al., 2005a).

Thus, a picture emerges of a country, that, by world standards, does not suffer from serious alcohol problems, and in which various traditional alcoholic beverages are made at home especially for moderate use in social gatherings or meals.

### **ALCOHOL USE AMONG IMMIGRANTS FROM ETHIOPIA IN ISRAEL**

The problem of alcohol abuse among the newcomers from Ethiopia emerged and was noticed by the Israeli public at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 90's and published in daily newspapers (e.g. Taub, 1989; Aarenson, 1991; Rosenblit, 1991; Saban, 1994). Many of the newcomers have taken to imbibing large amounts of beer, a habit begun after they had come to Israel. Beer reminded them of the taste of their traditional beverage (Tella), which in Ethiopia contains only 2.0% alcohol, while the beers in Israel contain 5.0% (Weiss, 1994). However, the Ethiopian immigrants have not been aware to the addictive potential of beer drinking and to the difference between Tella and beer (Rosen & Shmuel 2007). Moreover, the price of a bottle or can of beer in Israel is low and is the same as the price of a bottle or can of soft drink or juice. Many Ethiopians prefer to spend money on beer than to spend money on books for school, games for children or even necessary or nutritious food for the family (Rosen & Shmuel, 2007). Thus, there has been a visible consistent increase from the limited moderate social drinking of Tella among adults during meals and social gathering, and of Tej in feasts in the villages in Ethiopia to excessive drinking of Israeli commercial and imported beers as well as Arak among adults at home as well as among groups of adolescents in the clubs, malls, streets of Israel, during the mornings while not attending school, and especially at nights.

The problem of drinking has spread and is visible especially among those adults who came to Addis Ababa from the villages and waited there for a long time in order to immigrate to Israel. There they were exposed to many new and different alcoholic beverages and to the local taverns. Moreover, many Ethiopian immigrants see the consumption of beer as a part of manly identity and they use to offer large amounts of beer to adolescents in social gatherings. Large amounts of beer



and other alcoholic beverages are served in “mass-celebrations” such as weddings (which generally last few days) and even in funerals. (No alcohol was served in funerals in Ethiopia). The children are required to attend these events and to be absent from school (Rosen & Shmuel, 2007). The phenomenon of alcohol abuse among Ethiopian immigrants has been labeled as a “social bomb” (Rosen & Shmuel, 2007; Gross, 2007).

While there are many studies in Israel in relation to drinking among immigrants from the former Soviet Union (Weiss, in press), it was expected that there would be many studies of the second group of immigrants – the Ethiopians, particularly because their drinking is visible to the public. However, after a comprehensive search in academic libraries, principal institutions and in the Internet for any studies among Ethiopian Immigrants in the alcohol domain, the finding is that there is a paucity of studies in relation to alcohol use among immigrants from Ethiopia. A search of studies published in Hebrew and English in the epidemiological and treatment domains from 1984 to 2007 resulted in only three epidemiological studies and only four treatment reports. Some more studies did include Ethiopians but did not provide specific data concerning the Ethiopian immigrants (e.g. Elizur, 1999).

#### *Epidemiology of Drinking and Patterns of Drinking*

Research conducted in 1992 in the north of Israel among high school students, included a group of 24 Ethiopian participants. It revealed that beer was the main alcoholic beverage consumed by Ethiopian students (75.0%). They reported drinking mainly at home (58.0%), in order not to be different (33.0%) or to improve mood or forget troubles (25.0%). The Ethiopian students chose both school counselors (25.0%) and relatives (not parents) (20.8%) as preferred social support resources for alcohol problems (Weiss & Moore, 1994, 1995). As a result of this study, some prevention projects among the Ethiopians had been implemented in the mid-1990's (Weiss, 1994; Weiss, 1997; Bodovsky et al., 1995).

The major focus of research has been on the patterns of delinquents and delinquency among Ethiopian youths (Edelstein, 2002), linking the immigrant father's age and the weakening in his parental ability to teach relevant norms, to control behavior and to set normative boundaries, and on the dysfunction in the Ethiopian nuclear family. Because of “lack of resources”, other more pressing priorities and actual ignorance, no research was conducted from 1992 until 2003 concerning alcohol use among the Ethiopian immigrants. However, the Israeli government did invest a vast amount of resources to promote Ethiopian immigrants' integration into Israeli society.

A pilot study among 44 Ethiopian students was carried out in 2000 (Edelstein, 2000) and revealed that 75.0% drank alcohol at least once per week, and 25.0% were involved in property offences in order to get money to purchase alcohol. The full study was conducted on July 2003 (Edelstein 2004).

The full study was conducted among 512 youngsters in eight towns. The participants were drawn from boarding schools (22.0%), regular schools (45.0%) and “detached youth” (33.0%). Detached youth is a population of adolescents with varying degrees of social “detachment”, ranging from youngsters who neither work nor study (16.0% of the sample), to those who work and study in special educational settings, or who are formally listed as students, but rarely attend school. Half immigrated to Israel before 1990 (mainly Moses Operation) or were born in Israel, and half immigrated from then until 1996 (Solomon Operation and the waves of immigration that followed that operation). Most of them came from large families of four or more children (78.3%), and about third of them lived in one-parent families. Half of the participants had an unemployed father and 65.0% had an unemployed mother. Most of the fathers (75.0%) were above 45 years of age and 15.0% were above 65 years of age, while most of the mothers (55.0%) were younger than 44 years of age, and only 2.0% were above 65 years of age. Most of the fathers were illiterate or had only few years of education. The questionnaire

**Table 2.** Some alcohol use patterns of Ethiopian youth compared to general Israeli youth (%)

Alcohol use	Ethiopian youth (2003) (n =512)	Israeli youth (students), 2005 (n = 6,410)	Israeli youth (detached), 2005 (n = 1,000)
Drinking in the last year	67.3	49.4	61.4
Drunkenness in the last year	43.0	25.0	46.0
Males	73.0	59.1	66.7
Females	52.0	41.1	52.6
Preferred beer drinking*	44.0	34.1	50.9
Preferred wine drinking*	46.0	37.9	48.1
Preferred distilled spirit drinking*	37.0	32.5	47.6

\* There was the option of providing more than one answer

did not deal with ceremonial use of alcohol or with the use of Tella.

Table 2 provides data concerning alcohol use variables among Ethiopian youngsters (Edelstein, 2004), and the Israeli general population of students and detached youth (Ezrahi Et al., 2005). Moreover, it was revealed that alcohol use in the last year among Ethiopian youth in boarding schools (N=110), regular school (N=226) and among detached youth (N=169) was 75.0%, 60.0% and 84.0% respectively, and lifetime arrest by the police was 22.0%, 16.0% and 47.0% respectively (Edelstein, 2004). Table 3 focuses on various socio-demographic variables in relation to alcohol use (Edelstein, 2004).

In addition, 48.0% of respondents thought that Ethiopians prefer beer drinking, 45.0% thought that Ethiopians prefer distilled spirit drinking, 22.0% thought that Ethiopians prefer wine drinking, 51.0% thought that Ethiopian youngsters use money taken from parents for other purposes to purchase alcohol, 44.0% thought they use their own money and 18.0% thought that Ethiopian adolescents steal money in order to buy alcohol. Furthermore, 51.0% of Ethiopian youth got their first drink from a friend and 30.0% from a family relative. The first alcohol drinking was mainly in a social framework (64.0%) and at a family framework or home (30.0%). About 35.0% of Ethiopian youngsters paid for the beverage using money taken from parents (for other purposes), 38.0% used their own money and 9.0% used stolen money. About 10.0% reported involvement in a criminal act in order to have enough money

**Table 3.** Alcohol use in the last year among Ethiopian youth in relation to various socio-demographic variables

Social and demographic characteristics	Drinking in the last year (%)
<b>Age:</b>	
12-13	25.0
14-15	53.0
16-18	75.0
<b>Origin:</b>	
Israeli-born	67.0
Immigrated before 1989	76.0
Immigrated after 1990	61.0
<b>Religiosity:</b>	
Religious	42.0
Traditional	64.0
Secular	79.0
<b>Parents marital status:</b>	
Married	64.0
Divorced	72.0
One parent died	78.0
<b>Acquaintance with Ethiopian alcohol users:</b>	
Yes	73.0
No	20.0
<b>Father:</b>	
Alive	66.0
Dead	77.0
<b>Any drug use:</b>	
Prior to age 11	86.0
12-13	90.0
14-15	94.0
16-18	100.0
<b>Acquaintance with Ethiopian drug users:</b>	
0	44.0
1-4	73.0
5-10	77.0
11-15	81.0
16+	84.0

for buying alcohol drinks (Edelstein, 2004). As a result of this study, a special prevention program for Ethiopian adolescents groups and their parents was initiated in 2006 in fifteen Ethiopian communities throughout Israel. Each group consists of ten to sixteen adolescents, and the program encompasses fifteen sessions for youth, seven sessions for parents and three joint sessions. Each group is led by two moderators: an addiction specialist and an Amharic speaking Ethiopian guide (Barbash & Shachar, 2007).

### TREATMENT OF ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE

Until 2004, no attempt was made to distinguish Ethiopian patients from other patients in the treatment reports of the inpatient and outpatient alcohol treatment centers in Israel and provide data in relation to the Ethiopian immigrants (Marchevsky & Weiss, 1997). Table 4 (Sade, 2007; Michaely, 2007) summarizes the data since 2004 concerning the outpatient centers. In the period January 2006 – July 2007, seven Ethiopians were treated in the Rehabilitative Hostel for Alcoholics (50.0% of the hostel's patients) (Sade, 2007). The ambulatory governmental centers for alcoholism treatment are not set for dealing with the special needs of the Ethiopians: there is no Amharic speaking Ethiopian staff, and the native Israeli therapists do not have any acquaintance with the Ethiopian culture and the Ethiopian family structure. Therapists report of low numbers of referrals of Ethiopians to treatment, but also of difficulties in the treatment process due to language, mistrust of

governmental institutions and fear that children will be taken from home due to alcoholism in the family (Sade, 2007).

It is not clear whether the increasing number is due to increase in the incidence of alcohol problems among the Ethiopians or whether it is the consequence of more awareness or willingness to seek help. It is interesting to note that in the only Israeli inpatient residential center for alcoholics in 2000 there was one Ethiopian patient in the long-term hospitalization program (1.78%) and only four in the short-term program (2.53%) (Markevitch, 2001). In 2001 there were two Ethiopians in the long-term program (3.39%) and seven in the short-term program (3.48%) (Markevitch, 2002). The residential center was close in 2003 after 20 years of operation (Weiss, 2004). Among its activities was the distribution of a special prevention kit in Amharic (Weiss, 1994; Weiss, 1996).

### CONCLUSIONS

This paper is the first to summarize findings in the area of alcohol use among Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. Most of the materials were published in Hebrew, and are not available to English readers. The review identifies alcohol use among young Ethiopian immigrants as more prevalent than among the Israeli absorbing society, and shows that Ethiopian immigrants are overrepresented in treatment. Thus, a serious problematic picture emerges from the findings presented above, which has to be considered by prevention and treatment authorities. While moderate Tella or Tej use in Ethiopia was part of social life among the Jewish Ethiopians, and drunkenness was condemned, the Ethiopians in Israel, due to influences of the surrounding society and the difficulties in day to day life, started to drink beer and Arak in excessive manner and to become problem drinkers. The results can be attributed to conflict between the Ethiopian culture and the Israeli culture and to the intergenerational conflict among Ethiopian themselves. The phenomenon of

**Table 4.** Numbers and percentages of Ethiopians in the outpatient treatment centers for alcohol problems

Year	Number of Ethiopians	% of all patients
2004	23	1.5
2005	33	1.9
2006	53	3.4
2007	56	3.3



alcohol abuse, together with increasing rates of juvenile delinquency and school dropouts among the young Ethiopian generation must raise concerns for the future social well-being of the Ethiopian community.

The paper has practice implications for social workers and educators, who might use the information in their practice, to researchers who might develop proposals for research as well as for the development, implementation and evaluation of programs in accordance with the Ethiopian immigrants' situation, and for those who make policy on behalf of the Ethiopian immigrants. It is recommended for future efforts to conduct the first comprehensive research of alcohol use among adult immigrants from Ethiopia, To develop and implement alcohol prevention programs, including programs for adults in Amharic, in the Ethiopian communities, as well as workshops for youth (Lekach, 2000; Kimchi, 2002), to train Ethiopian professionals and recovered Ethiopian alcoholics to lead the prevention activities, and to develop and implement special alcohol prevention programs aimed at Ethiopian students in the junior-high schools, when school drops out begins around the ages of 13-14 years.

It is also recommended to conduct special workshops aimed at adult Ethiopians in order to deal with their special familial problems, change norms that cannot continue in Israel, and give parents tools in order to identify alcohol problems among their children, and to increase educational and learning activities and extracurricular activities among Ethiopian youth, as well as activities for detached Ethiopian youth especially in underprivileged neighborhoods. Disparities in socio-economic achievements between Ethiopian Israelis and the rest of the population may lead to marginalization and proliferation of social problems among the Ethiopians and to an increase in alcohol use. Thus, investment in the advancement of the Ethiopian youth is important not only in order to prevent excessive alcohol use, but mainly to avoid the development of an "oppositional culture" by the second-generation Ethiopians, leading to resistance of their integration into

mainstream society, as a response to their condition of poverty, isolation and alienation from Israeli society.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Steven Schwartz, Ph.D. (Can.), formerly New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, for his comments on drafts of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Aarenson, Y. (20.11.1999). Missing Ethiopia - holding a bottle of beer. *News – Daily Newspaper (Chadashot)*, 27. [Hebrew].
- Adamaso, D. (29/8/2007). Closing the doorway for hope. *Maariv – Daily Newspaper*. [Hebrew].
- Alem, A., Kebede, D., & Kullgren, G. (1999). The epidemiology of problem drinking in Butajira, Ethiopia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplement*, 397, 77-83.
- Alem, A., Kullgren, G., Kebede, D., & Jacobsson, L. (1999). Suicide attempts among adults in Butajira, Ethiopia. . *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplement*, 397, 70-76.
- Alem, K., Kebede, D., Mitike, G., & Lemma, W. (2006). Unprotected sex, sexually transmitted infections and problem drinking among female sex workers in Ethiopia. *The Ethiopian Journal of Health Development*, 20, 93-98.
- Aliya and Klita Department, Jewish Agency for Israel, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (2007). *Report*. Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Apel, A. (4 July 2004). *Background Document for Discussion on Delinquency among Young Newcomers*. Submitted to the Committee of Immigration and Absorption, Knesset (Parliament), Knesset Research and Information Center, Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Awas, M., Kebede, D., & Alem, A. (1999). Major mental disorders in Butajira,

- southern Ethiopia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplement*, 397, 56-64.
- Bar-Yosef, RW. (2001). Children of two cultures: Immigrant children from Ethiopia in Israel. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32, 231-246.
- Barbash, S., & Shachar, L. (2007). A prevention project for Ethiopian adolescents and their parents: a possible get-together. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 55, 5-6. [Hebrew].
- Ben-David, A., & Tirosh Ben-Ari, A. (1997). The experience of being different: Black Jews in Israel. *Journal of Black Studies*, 27, 510-527.
- Benita, E., & Noam, G. (1995). The absorption of Ethiopian immigrants: Selected findings from local surveys. *Israel Social Science Research*, 10, 81-96.
- Beno, G. (9/9/2007). Why he threw her through the window? *Yediot Hacharonot – Daily Newspaper*, 6. [Hebrew].
- Betre, M., Kebede, D., & Kassaye, M. (1977). Modifiable risk factors for coronary heart disease among young people in Addis Ababa. *East African Medical Journal*, 74, 376-381.
- Bodovsky, D., David, J., Eran, Y., & Elias, Y. (1995). Alcohol: Dilemmas in prevention among newcomers from Ethiopia. In N., Michaely, & O., Naor (eds.), *Alcohol Prevention*. 66-78. Ramat Gan: EFSHAR – The Unit for Alcoholism Treatment Programs, Jerusalem: The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. [Hebrew].
- Chaklay, A. (2002). Processes of identity consolidation among Ethiopian adolescents, theory and group intervention model. *From Disconnection to Integration (Menituk Leshiluv)*, 11, 8-21. [Hebrew].
- Cohen, O., Brabash, S., Michaely N., & Sason, M. (2005). *A Cultural Sensitive Intervention Program of Alcohol Abuse Prevention among Immigrant Youth 2004-2005*. Jerusalem: Ministry of Absorption, Ministry of Social Affairs, EFSHAR Organization. [Hebrew].
- Cohen, S. (2006). Project Plan for 2006 Concerning At-risk Immigrant Youth and Domestic Violence Prevention. Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. [Hebrew].
- Cohen, Y. (1994). ISAT – fire time: Ethiopian youth at-risk. *From Disconnection to Integration (Menituk Leshiluv)*, 6, 17-27. [Hebrew].
- Committee of Immigration and Absorption of the Knesset (Parliament) (22 November 2006). *Protocol 46*, Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Desta, b. (1977). A survey of the alcohol content of traditional beverages. *Ethiopian Medical Journal*, 15, 65-68.
- Dotan, T. (1985). Jewish children from Ethiopia in Israel; Some observations on their adaptation patterns. *Israel Social Science Research*, 3, 97-103.
- Edelstein, A. (11.6.2000). Pilot study: Patterns of psychoactive substance use among Ethiopian youth in Israel. Report submitted to the Anti Drugs Authority, Jerusalem. [Hebrew]. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 28, 12, September 2000, [Hebrew].
- Edelstein, A. (2002). Patterns of delinquents and delinquency among Ethiopian youths in Israel. *Police and Society (Mishtara Vechevra)*, 6, 5-32. [Hebrew].
- Edelstein, A. (2004). Patterns of psychoactive substance use among Ethiopian youth in Israel. *Police and Society (Mishtara Vechevra)*, 8, 95-126. [Hebrew].
- Elizur, Y. (1999). Family characteristics, parent-child relationships, and substance use as they related to delinquent behavior and the use of psycho-active substances among adolescents studying in a youth village in Israel. *Report*. Submitted to the Anti Drugs Authority, Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Ezrachi, I, Shteinberg, D., Rosiner, I., Ovadia, N., & Moshe, T. (2005). *The Use of Psychoactive substances among Israeli citizens 2005: Epidemiological Study*. Jerusalem: The Anti Drugs Authority. [Hebrew].
- Gitait, A. (2006). Project for reading improvement using computers in the absorption centers of the Jewish Agency. *Gadish: Bulletin of Adult Education*, 10, 104-111. [Hebrew].

- Gross, A.A. (2007). Implementation of the multi-cultural approach in alcohol prevention programs. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 55, 10-11. [Hebrew].
- Halper, J. (1985). The absorption of Ethiopian immigrants: a return to the Fifties. *Israel Social Science Research*, 1-2, 112-139.
- Information Center Publishing Service, The Anti Drugs Authority (1999). *Drugs – Motives and Prevention*. Jerusalem. [Amharic].
- Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2007). *2006 Statistical Abstract of Israel*. Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- JDC-Brookdale Institute (April 2001). Integration of Ethiopians in the Israeli Society: Challenges, Policy, Plans and Action Directions. Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Kacen, L. (2006). Spousal abuse among immigrants from Ethiopia in Israel. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 1276-1290.
- Kaplan, S. (1999). Can the Ethiopian change his skin? The Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) and racial discourse. *African Affairs*, 98, 535-550.
- Kaplan, S., & Rosen, H. (1993). Ethiopian immigrants in Israel between preservation of culture and invention of tradition. *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 35, 35-48.
- Kaplan, S. (2002). Black and white, blue and white and beyond the pale: Ethiopian Jews and the discourse of colour in Israel. *Jewish Culture and History*, 5, 51-68.
- Kebede, D., & Alem A. (1999). The epidemiology of alcohol dependence and problem drinking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplement*, 397, 30-34.
- Kebede, D., & Ketsela, T. (1993). Precursors of atherosclerotic and hypertensive diseases among adolescents in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Bulletin of the WHO*, 71, 787-794.
- Kebede, D., & Ketsela, T. (1993a). Suicide attempts in Ethiopian adolescents in Addis Ababa high schools. *Ethiopian Medical Journal*, 31, 83-90.
- Kebede, D., Bevero, T., Shibire, T., Fekadu, A., Alem, A., & Deyessa, N. (2005). The distribution of mental disorders among an isolated island community in southern Ethiopia. *Ethiopian Medical Journal*, 43, 71-77.
- Kebede, D., Alem, A., Mitike, G., Enquesselassie, F., Berhane, F., Abebe, Y., Ayele, R., Lemma, W., Assefa, T., & Gebremichael, T. (2005a). Khat and alcohol use and risky sex behaviour among in-school and out-of-school youth in Ethiopia. *BMC Public Health*, 5, in page 109.
- Kimchi, S. (2002). With rap rhythm to the heart of the Ethiopian youth. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 35, 10. [Hebrew].
- L.O. – Combat Violence against Women, <http://www.no2violence.co.il/Articles/Article034.htm>
- Lazin, FA. (1997). The housing policies for Ethiopian immigrants in Israel: Spatial segregation, economic feasibility and political acceptability. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 3(4), 39-68.
- Lekach, Z. (2000). Workshops aimed at prevention of alcohol abuse among Ethiopian youth. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 27, 12. [Hebrew].
- Maart, D. (2006). Crisis in parent authority among Ethiopian newcomers and the way of its repair. *Gadish: Bulletin of Adult Education*, 10, 98-103. [Hebrew].
- Malamko, Y. (2006). Collaboration of Ethiopian parents in the educational process of their children in boarding schools. *Gadish: Bulletin of Adult Education*, 10, 83-97. [Hebrew].
- Marchevsky, S., & Weiss, S. (1997). Characteristics of patients in the residential center for alcoholics in Ramat-Gan during twelve years and their significance. *Medicine (Harefuah)*, 132, 586-590. [Hebrew].
- Markevitch, S. (2001). Socio-demographic characteristics of alcoholics treated in year 200 in the residential treatment center of alcoholics. *Alcoholism in Israel – Interdisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 1, 222-224. [Hebrew].

- Markevitch, S. (2002). Characteristics of patients treated in year 2001 in the residential treatment center. *Alcohol in Israel – Interdisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 2, 67-69. [Hebrew].
- Michaely, N. (2007). Numbers and percentages of Ethiopian alcoholics in treatment in the outpatient treatment centers. *Internal Report*. EFSHAR – The Unit for Alcoholism Treatment Programs. [Hebrew].
- Myers, JDC, Brookdale Institute (2006). *Processing of the 2005 Statistical Abstract of Israel*. Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Nevo, T. (1999). The phenomenon of runaways and homeless youngsters. *From Disconnection to Integration (Menituk Leshiluv)*, 9, 58-69. [Hebrew].
- Offer, S. (2004). The socio-economic integration of the Ethiopian community in Israel. *International Migration*, 42, 29-56.
- Roar-Strier, D. (1996). Coping strategies of immigrant parents: directions for family therapy. *Society and Welfare (Chevra Verevacha)*, 16, 467-481. [Hebrew].
- Roar-Strier, D. (2006). Immigrant fathers in Israel. *Society and Welfare (Chevra Verevacha)*, 28, 405-431. [Hebrew].
- Rosen, C., & Shmuel, N. (2007). From Tella to Goldstar – the hazards of alcoholism among Ethiopian immigrants. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 55, 3-4. [Hebrew].
- Rosenblit, A. (29.12.1991). Drowning their hardship in alcohol. *Davar – Morning Newspaper*, 9. [Hebrew].
- Saban, Y. (20.4.1994). Drink themselves to death. *Maariv – Daily Newspaper*, 6-7. [Hebrew].
- Sade, M. (2007). An unique intervention program for the treatment of alcoholics from the Ethiopian community. *All about Alcohol (Akol Al Alcohol)* – EFSHAR Bulletin, 55, 9. [Hebrew].
- Savanto, MM., & Yosef, E. (2004). Group aimed at communication between Ethiopian parents and youth in the care of the youth advancement services. *From Disconnection to Integration (Menituk Leshiluv)*, 12, 133-144. [Hebrew].
- Schindler, R. (1993). Emigration and the black Jews of Ethiopia: Dealing with bereavement and loss. *International Social Work*, 36, 7-19.
- Schindler, R., & Ribner D. (1995). Migration and ethnic identity: The black Jews of Ethiopia and their settlement in Israel. *Community Development Journal*, 30, 372-383.
- Selinus, R. (1971). The Traditional Foods of the Central Ethiopian Highlands. *Research Report No. 7*, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Shabtay, M. (2001). Living with threatening identity: Life experiences with skin color difference among youth and adult Ethiopians in Israel. *Trends (Megamot)*, 1-2, 97-112. [Hebrew].
- Shabtay, M. (2001a). Between Reggae and Rap – The Belonging Challenge of Ethiopian Youth in Israel. Tel Aviv: Charikover. [Hebrew].
- Shabtay, M. (2003). *Ethiopian At-risk Youth*. 11-13, JDC, ELEM Organization. Jerusalem. [Hebrew].
- Shchori, M. (2005). Ethnic stereotypes and social distance in the Israeli society. *Social Issues in Israel*, 1, 64-88.
- Shemesh, I. (1999). Characteristics of Ethiopian detached youth. *From Disconnection to Integration (Menituk Leshiluv)*, 9, 45-57. [Hebrew].
- Short, G. (1995). Ethiopian children in Israeli schools: The prospects for successful integration. *Comparative Education*, 31, 355-367.
- Taub, A. (28.7.1989). Beer festival will be held tomorrow – an occasion for celebration for the Ethiopians. *The City (Haeer – Karmiel's local newspaper)*. [Hebrew].
- Teroan, Y. (30 January 2005). Background Document for Discussion on Policy and Intervention Concerning Ethiopian Youth Absorption: Follow-up of Reports and Decisions Implementation. Submitted to the Committee of Immigration and Absorption, Knesset (Parliament), Knesset Research and Information Center, Jerusalem. [Hebrew].

- Weiss, S. (1994). Prevention of alcoholism in Israel among adult immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. *Addiction*, 89, 351-353.
- Weiss, S. (1996). The alcohol scene in Israel. *The Globe*, 4, 14-15.
- Weiss, S. (December 1997). Ethnic-oriented community project among immigrants in Israel – A model for other countries which absorb immigrants. In Experiences with Community Action Research Projects for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems. *WHO Document No. LVNG 040302*, 281-286.
- Weiss, S. (2004). A sad note from Israel. *Addiction*, 99, 1226-1227.
- Weiss, S. (in press). Alcohol use and problems among immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel. *Substance Abuse*.
- Weiss, S., & Moore, M. (1994). Why, where and with whom do Israeli teenagers drink? To whom do they turn for help with alcohol problems? *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 29, 465-471.
- Weiss, S. & Moore, M. (1995). Why, where and with whom do Israeli adolescents drink? To whom do they turn for help with alcohol problems? *Society and Welfare (Chevra Verevacha)*, 15, 195-207. [Hebrew].
- WHO (1999). Global Status Report on Alcohol, Geneva: WHO.
- WHO (2004). Global Status Report on Alcohol, Geneva:WHO
- Zein, ZA. (1988). Polydrug abuse among Ethiopian university students with particular reference to khat. *Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 91, 71-75.